



The Main Feature

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Another Round (Druk)

Denmark/Sweden/Netherlands 2020
117 mins. Certificate 12

Director Thomas Vinterberg
Screenplay Thomas Vinterberg and
 Tobias Lindholm
Photography Sturla Brandth Grøvlen
Production Sabine Hviid
Design

Cast	
Mads Mikkelsen	Martin
Thomas Bo Larsen	Tommy
Magnus Millang	Nikolaj
Lars Ranthe	Peter
Maria Bonnevie	Anika
Albert Rudbeck Lindhardt	Sebastian



Another Round is a touching and thought-provoking drama about male friendship, alcohol and Dad-dancing. It reunites the director and lead actor from *The Hunt* (shown by the Club in 2014 and achieving a rating of 7.13).

Mikkelsen plays Martin, a jaded high-school history teacher trapped in a midlife crisis. He struggles to communicate with his wife and two young sons, and bumbles his way through lessons, leading one student to walk out accurately claiming “this has gone bonkers.” His class and their parents subsequently set up a meeting to articulate their fear that his lack of engagement is endangering their University applications.

He attends a 40th birthday dinner for Nikolaj (Magnus Millang), along with his middle-aged colleagues Tommy (Thomas Bo Larsen) and Peter (Lars Ranthe). During an alcohol-soaked evening, the morose and lacklustre quartet question what happened to their dreams and discuss the theory of Norwegian psychiatrist Finn Skårderud. He claimed that humans need a constant blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.05% (equivalent to just under two glasses of wine) to be creative, relaxed and courageous. Citing some famous functioning alcoholics (Churchill, Hemingway), the four make a pact to stay low-level drunk all day (with a rule they should not drink after 8pm or on the weekends) while strictly monitoring and recording intake and impact in a pseudo-academic document. Freed from sobriety, the friends find themselves more lucid, communicative and spontaneous, with Martin re-engaging with his family and energising his students, and his colleagues re-discovering their work mojo. “I haven’t felt this good in ages,”

Martin tells his friends. The foursome decides to tweak the dose and conditions but negative consequences begin to emerge for them, their families and their careers in teaching.



The movie is not preachy, with an ambivalent moral standpoint. Despite the events in the latter part of the film, there is also a poignant scene where an anxious would-be medical student (Sebastian) is offered Dutch (or should that be Danish?) courage by one of the teachers before a crucial (and ultimately successful) interview.

Thomas Vinterberg described the film as a “survey and exploration not only of alcohol usage but of the uncontrollable in life (love, ideas and freedom).” In an interview in Entertainment Weekly, Mikkelsen noted

“It actually started out as being a tribute to alcohol and then we quite quickly realised we had to touch upon the other side of the coin as well. But we don't want to make a film just about the dark side of drinking because that's been done numerous times to perfection, and we also did not want to be immoral about it. We all know how beautiful it can be, how richer a conversation can be after a couple of glasses. We also know after a bottle how it's not that interesting anymore. But we know if you can hit a perfect zone, as we argue in the film, there is something to gain there. So there is something there, and that's what we saying. It can go both ways.”

The film was a big hit in Denmark, with 840,000 admissions (in a nation of 4.7m adults), and won a slew of awards including the BAFTA and Oscar for Best Foreign language film.

Mark Kermode in the Observer praised the “superb ensemble cast” and “the magnificently modulated performance by Mikkelsen” while Empire Magazine described it as “funny and rich, a fresh, perfectly played, clear-eyed take on middle age ennui...intoxicating.”

And what of the “minimum BAC” theory underlying the experiment? Sadly not true. Finn Skårderud (born 1956) is indeed a Norwegian psychiatrist (and psychotherapist, author and professor) but (according to Wikipedia) his “theory” stems from a misinterpreted preface he wrote to a book originally published in 1880 ['On the Psychological Effects of Wine' by Edmondo de Amicis]. What is sadly true is that Denmark has a problem with alcohol, with the EU Commission reporting in 2020 that it leads Europe in binge drinking. According to the report, 37% of adult Danes said they had “regular major alcohol usage,” against an EU average of 20%. Similarly, a World Health Organization report from 2019 found that Danish 15-year-olds consumed alcohol at nearly double the European average.

The film is dedicated to Ida, Thomas Vinterberg's 19-year old daughter, who was originally cast as one of Mikkelsen's children, but was killed in a car crash in Belgium four days into filming.

An American English-language remake of the film is planned, with Leonardo DiCaprio slated to reprise the role of Martin. I suspect there would be more back-story and moralising, and that the students (who look authentically and refreshingly young in this Danish version) would look somewhat older....

But...enjoy or, as they say in Denmark, Skål!

Eugene Smith



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Eugene Smith considers other films which have looked at life through the bottom of a glass

As Mads Mikkelsen said “...we don't want to make a film just about the dark side of drinking because that's been done numerous times to perfection....”. He could have been referring to these explorations of the effects of alcohol.

The TV One

Mitchell & Webb Show - Slightly less than two drinks – first aired August 2010
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTS CppeFzX4> (6 minutes)

“You must never drink any more than slightly less than two drinks. Beyond that state of mildly intoxicated perfection lies drunken madness, third pints, kebabs and destruction.”

The Obvious One

The Lost Weekend (1945/Dir Billy Wilder/101 mins/B&W)



The desperate life of a chronic alcoholic is followed through a four-day drinking bout. The film stars Ray Milland and the first Mrs Reagan (Jane Wyman). It won four major Academy Awards (film, actor, director, and screenplay) and is one of only three movies to win the main award at both the Oscars and Cannes, joining *Marty* (1955) and *Parasite* (2019).

The Sad One

Days of Wine and Roses (1962/Blake Edwards/117 mins/B&W)
An alcoholic PR man (Jack Lemmon) woos and marries a young secretary (Lee Remick), encourages her to drink and is powerless to stop her slide into addiction. He eventually recovers – she is less fortunate. The film had a lasting effect in reinforcing the growing social acceptance of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

The Surprising One

Leaving Las Vegas (1995/Mike Figgis/111 mins)

Harrowing, dark account of an alcoholic failed writer (Nicholas Cage) who goes to Las Vegas to drink himself to death and strikes up a relationship with a prostitute (Elisabeth Shue). Surprising as (i) it's a difficult watch but a major studio still made it despite [spoiler alert] the absence of a sequel, (ii) it made \$32m at the US box office and (iii) Cage's performance was outstanding and won the Best Actor Oscar.

The Disappointing One

Girl on the Train (2016/Tate Taylor/112 mins)

Divorced, lonely and boozy Rachel Watson (Emily Blunt) commutes daily past the house of her ex-husband and his glamorous new family. Her frequent drink-induced blackouts prove a liability during a missing person inquiry. The sparkling source novel (set in London) was then the fastest-selling adult fiction in history; the film (relocated to NY) was flat.

The One with Denzel Washington

Flight (2012/Robert Zemeckis/138 mins)



A commercial pilot heroically lands a damaged plane, saving most of the passengers. He is injured and hospital readings reveal traces of alcohol (and cocaine). He tries to cover up the evidence but after a long investigation is held to account and admits his addiction. Solid, well-acted and much praised by all bar the Air Line Pilots' Association.

Honourable mentions

Sideways; *Best*; *My Name is Joe*; *Arthur*; *Judy*; *A Star is Born*; *Bad Santa*; *Come Back, Little Sheba*

Comments and reactions to: **Official Secrets**

No of reaction slips received = 13

Average score = 8.15

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	2	6	1	3

Interesting and vital story, but under-lit photography and too many clichéd characters. Should have been much better.

Outstanding performances and a gripping true story everyone should be told about

Best film this year.

Fascinating. An enjoyable film

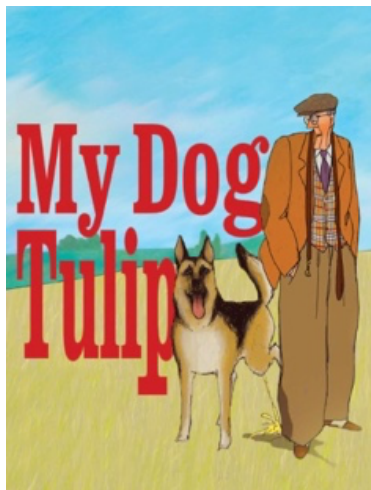
Never filled in one of these before, but this is the best film I've seen at WNCC in over 40 years

Brilliant film, captivated from beginning to end

Terrific story, but it seemed to lose something in the telling

Position	Film	Average score
1	Official Secrets	8.15
2	Breakfast at Tiffany's	7.20
3	Nomadland	7.13
4	Parasite	7.07
5	The Farewell	6.85
6	The Personal History of David Copperfield	6.67
7	Permission	6.60
8	Pain and Glory	6.59
9	The Crimson Pirate	6.42
10	Portrait of a Lady on Fire	6.22
11	Baby Driver	6.19
12	Limbo	6.18
13	JoJo Rabbit	6.04
14	Bait	5.35

Forthcoming attraction: 12 May 2022 – **My Dog Tulip**



Animated dog movie: Those three little words are enough to make many parents shudder in expectation of having to accompany their kindergarten-age children to a sentimental anthropomorphic contrivance. Now read the following quotation from My Dog Tulip, an animated dog movie like no other, and reconsider your qualms. 'She offered me what I have never found in my life with humans: constant, single-hearted, incorruptible, uncritical devotion, which it is in the nature of dogs to offer'. Those words, spoken in devotional tones by the film's narrator distill with elegant succinctness the bond between human and pet when the human is a lonely gay man who has all but given up on finding the long-time companion that the narrator calls his 'ideal friend'. Stephen Holden, New York Times